

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 21-22 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 4 and 14 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claim 14 is rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of its base claim and its original limitation as suggested by the examiner. Claim 4 is already in independent form in the April 7, 2006 Amendment. Thus, claims 4 and 14 are in condition for allowance.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); and (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendments merely rewrite a dependent claim in independent form). Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5-13, 15, 16, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-2002-326035 to Ichikawa (hereinafter '035 publication). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites that "there are at least two kinds of cells different from each other in their cross-sectional areas perpendicular to the flow direction of a fluid to be filtered due to different interval pitches of the partition walls in the x axis direction and/or different interval pitches of the partition walls in the y axis direction." Claim 13 recites similar features. The '035 publication does not disclose or suggest this feature.

In particular, the term "pitch" is known in the honeycomb art as the distance between the center lines of adjacent partition walls. (See specification at, for example, Figs. 1B and 3, and paragraphs [0071] and [0072].) (A dictionary will evidence such a definition. An excerpt of a dictionary regarding the definition of "pitch" will be submitted upon the Examiner's request.) The pitch of partition walls of a honeycomb structure is irrelevant to the thickness

of the partition walls, because only the center lines of the partition walls are relevant. Thus, although the thickness of the partition walls may affect the distance between adjacent surfaces of two adjacent partition walls, the thickness of the partition walls does not affect the distance between the center lines of two adjacent walls, therefore it does not affect the pitch of the partition walls.

The '035 publication discloses honeycomb structures with partition walls of different thicknesses. (See Figs. 5 and 6.) As a result, the distance between adjacent surfaces of two adjacent partition walls may be different. The Office Action asserts that such different distances disclose different pitches. This assertion is inaccurate.

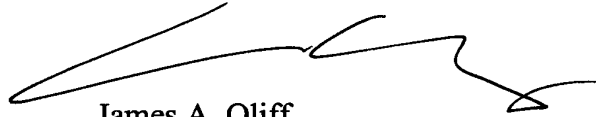
As discussed above, the pitch of the partition walls does not represent the distance between adjacent surfaces of adjacent partition walls, and that the thickness of the partition walls does not affect the pitch of the partition walls. In fact, Figs. 5 and 6 of the '035 publication indicates that the distance between the center lines of adjacent partition walls remains unchanged, even though the thickness of the partition walls changes. Thus, although the '035 publication discloses different distances between adjacent surfaces of adjacent partition walls, the '035 publication does not disclose or suggest different pitches of partition walls.

For at least the above reasons, the '035 publication does not disclose each and every element recited in claims 1 and 13, and claims 2, 3, 5-12, 15, 16, 21 and 22 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-13, 15, 16, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-16 and 21-22 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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